

OSMP - Volunteer Report 2005

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Volunteers Inspire by Example!

Each year, during National Volunteer Week, the city of Boulder, and the Open Space and Mountain Parks Department, join thousands of communities in saying "Thank you!" to the neighbors, families and organizations who care for our lands and their inhabitants. This report honors these volunteers for their contributions during 2004, and inspires us as we continue into 2005. Our volunteers help accomplish the Open Space and Mountain Parks Department mission and charter goals, conserving precious local ecosystems and contributing to our community's future. Our volunteers lend their skills and talents, reconnecting with the land and each other. Their service includes tending native plant gardens, counting waterfowl at Sombraero Marsh, maintaining ditches, watching young eagles take first flight, pulling invasive plants, leading students on nature hikes or greeting visitors on favorite trails. We deeply appreciate and value their dedication and enthusiasm!

2004 proved another full and productive year, with more than 700 volunteers contributing over 17,000 hours. These dedicated volunteers advise, educate, monitor, restore and maintain -- extending our ability to care for the land. Our year-end data reflects that volunteer service was distributed broadly and equitably over the entire system. This annual report highlights these volunteer contributions for 2004. Volunteer Services facilitates volunteer contributions and staff's ability to utilize those contributions. We administer operations; manage and supervise programs and volunteers; and provide training, education and outreach for employees, volunteers and the public. We strive to craft opportunities which benefit our local ecosystems and community, and ensure that all volunteers and staff have positive experiences. We so appreciate the support of our excellent staff! They provide technical and field training; supervise and evaluate volunteers; and provide logistical and administrative support. We continue to marvel at the skills, competence and dedication that OSMP staff demonstrates, both in their specialties and in their work with volunteers. Our success is measured by the satisfaction and accomplishments of our volunteers and staff. This year's surveys continue to show very high approval ratings for our volunteer programs and services. Your ideas, questions and suggestions are most welcome and encouraged, as we continue to meet the evolving needs for programs and services. We look forward to hearing from you! Lisa Dierauf and Susan Ross, Open Space and Mountain Parks, coordinators of Volunteer Services

City of Boulder Open Space and Mountain Parks Summary of Volunteer Programs and Projects 2004

Resource Conservation Support

Bat Monitors counted bats during June, July and August. By tracking areas of high bat activity, volunteers help with resource conservation decisions. This program expanded in 2004, with 45 volunteers monitoring 23 sites.

Cultural and Historic Researchers, who are professional and vocational archaeologists or historians, assisted staff with inventory of Open Space and Mountain Parks resources.

The Herbarium Group collected and curated plant specimens and monitored rare plants, weeds and exotics. They spent the summer in the field and the winter working in the lab. Volunteers have helped build this program from the ground up, contributing decades of service. They also provided training and shared their experience with new recruits and staff.

Nesting Raptor Monitors were in the field February through July, observing sites once a week and gathering information on our local nesting birds of prey. Seasonal closures of these important areas have resulted in numerous fledglings every year. In 2004, OSMP had 55 active volunteers monitoring 12 sites.

Sawhill Ponds Wildlife Monitors hiked set transects February through September, observing and gathering data on the diverse ponds in this special area. Volunteers have been collecting data since 1984.

Sombraero Marsh Avian Monitors observed at this restored marsh, noting numbers and varieties of species. 2004 was the second year for this project.

The Native Gardeners continued using their expertise to develop and help maintain the demonstration garden at Chautauqua Ranger Cottage. The loss of OSMP Plant Ecologist Ann Armstrong, the garden's founder and mentor, has inspired plans for expanding the program.

These OSMP Volunteers contributed over 5,000 hours of support in 2004.

Community and Visitor Services Support

Events Hosts greeted and provided information to the public and visitors at the Boulder Creekfest, Farmer's Market, Fall Fest, Dehaunting OSMP, Parade of Lights, Holiday Treecutting and other community events, and at trailhead information tables.

Flagstaff Summit Nature Center Hosts welcomed visitors and introduced them to interactive nature exhibits about the area. These volunteers are sole hosts of this inviting log cabin nestled in the trees, which was open weekends June through fall.

Trail Guides, who have been aiding Open Space and Mountain Parks visitors since 1991, continued welcoming visitors on many popular trails. They provided information on interesting area features, seasonal changes, management and natural/cultural history, enhancing the visitor's experience and enjoyment of the land.

Volunteer Naturalists provided interpretive nature programs in the field and the classroom for schools, community and visitor groups, and the general public. New and returning Volunteer Naturalists presented over 100 programs in 2004.

These OSMP Volunteers contributed more than 1,800 hours of support in 2004.

System Support

Open Space Board of Trustees: Volunteers appointed by City Council researched issues, advised on policy, and approved purchase of properties. Citizens participating on the Visitor Plan Advisory Committee, and the Community Group Forum shared information and worked with staff on drafts of the Open Space and Mountain Parks Visitor Master Plan.

Individual volunteers helped staff with Administrative Assistance and Research in resource conservation, education and outreach, planning and volunteer services.

These OSMP Volunteers contributed more than 1,500 hours of support in 2004.
Stewardship Projects

Families, individuals, businesses and organizations started or continued stewardship work, learning about and helping to maintain or monitor areas, and providing care for our lands. Commitments ranged from once-a-year cleanups, maintenance, and education projects to weekly service. Work this year included habitat restoration, noxious weed control, area and trail maintenance and cleanups.

Some highlights of 2004 Stewardship activities include:

AmeriCorps and the Cedars youth group continued their excellent restoration, maintenance/construction, weeding and large scale cleanup work throughout the system. Americorps has been contributing since 1992, and young people from Cedars have been helping since 1991.

Sierra Club benefited Sawhill Ponds wildlife for the 13th year in a row, improving habitat in this wetland area by removing Russian olives and planting cottonwood trees

Volunteers for Outdoor Colorado partnered with Open Space and Mountain Parks on an extensive project -- over 400 volunteers spent the day helping to eradicate thousands of invasive Mediterranean Sage plants on our prairie lands.

Flatirons Climbing Council, Access Fund and enthusiastic Trashbash volunteers worked on large scale cleanup and maintenance projects on Flagstaff and Dinosaur mountains.

Boulder Off-road Alliance conducted annual trail maintenance at Marshall Mesa, and Steward Joanna Sampson continued to keep trailhead brochures stocked.

Several Friends & Neighbors contributed time doing education, research, and clean-up after dog walkers.

Friends & Neighbors continued to pull knapweed throughout the season in the Steinbach/O'Conner and Four Pines area.

LaborSource volunteers continue to do regular trash clean-up at trailheads.

Individual Weed Warriors pulled numerous bags of noxious weeds by hand across the system and throughout the season.

Wildlands Restoration volunteers worked with OSMP doing extensive work to thin thousands of "dog hair" trees, pull noxious weeds, and help with other restoration in the Lindsay area.

These Volunteers contributed more than 9,000 hours of support in 2004.

In all, over 700 Open Space and Mountain Parks volunteers contributed 17,000 hours during 2004 -- a tremendous effort!